



#### A RESOLUTION BY:

00- <sub>Q</sub> -1683

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE REYNOLDSTOWN MASTERPLAN; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation has provided funds to develop a master plan for the Reynoldstown community; and

WHEREAS, the Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation working with local residents hired a consultant to produce a revised master plan; and

WHEREAS, said master plan identifies long and short term strategies and recommendations for public and private investment; and

WHEREAS, NPU-N, residents and businesses in the Reynoldstown community have adopted said plan as their blueprint for the future; and

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to adopt said master plan.

## NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** The City Council hereby accepts the documents entitled "Reynoldstown 2000 and Beyond: A Neighborhood Master Plan," prepared by Planners for Environmental Quality (PEQ) and dated September 2000, as a guide for the revitalization of Reynoldstown.

**SECTION 2.** The City Council hereby requests the Department of Planning and Development to review said document and to incorporate the recommendations set forth therein, as appropriate, into the annual update of the City's Comprehensive Development Plan.

A true copy, Thomas Daughin Johnson Municipal Clerk, CMC

ADOPTED by the Council APPROVED by the Mayor

JAN 16, 2001 JAN 23, 2001

# REYNOLDSTOWN 2000 AND BEYOND

## DRAFT

# A NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN

# REYNOLDSTOWN 2000 AND BEYOND: A NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN

September 2000

**Draft** 

A Project of:

Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning

Submitted by:

Planners for Environmental Quality (PEQ)

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Union City, Georgia 30291

Reynoldstown: 2000 and Beyond

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#### I. COMMUNITY HISTORY AND INVOLVEMENT

#### 1. Community History

Reynoldstown is one of the oldest African-American neighborhoods in Atlanta. Reynoldstown is situated south of Memorial Drive (formerly Fair Street) to Interstate 20 with Moreland Avenue to the east, Pearl Street to the west and the Southern Railroad to the north (Figure I). Reynoldstown was settled by freed slaves in the 1860's during the closing months of the Civil War. The Union soldiers had destroyed most of the railroads in Georgia during the war. When the destruction finally ended, the rebuilding of those railroads provided work for thousands of newly freed slaves who had left rural Georgia to seek work in the city. During this period, real estate and construction costs in Atlanta were rising forcing many working class residents to live on the edges of the city. As land was cheaper in areas like Reynoldstown, low and moderate-income families were attracted to build homes and start businesses. It was this kind of economic opportunity that inspired the establishment of this historic neighborhood.

Reynoldstown originally had four main streets - Wylie, Oliver (now Kenyon), Clark and part of Flat Shoals Avenue. All of these streets led to the railroad "Hulsey Yard." Black rail workers were known as "Hulsey Helpers." The economic center of the community was at Wylie and Oliver with a barbershop, grocery store and cafes. Wylie was the first street to be paved and was for years the only paved street, thus the main thoroughfare. A subcommunity "Tin Cup Alley," later and still known as "The Slide" because of the downward slope and muddy conditions, was home to railroad workers and the community's semi-professional baseball field where the "Reynoldstown Stars" played in the 1930s. Most of the freed slaves laid down track while others worked as firemen and workmen in the roundhouse where locomotives were serviced and repaired. Many of the women were employed in the city and surrounding suburbs as domestic workers. But Reynoldstown also had many farmers, teachers and businessmen among its early population. Access from Reynoldstown into the city of Atlanta was half an hour walk, which proved tiresome and inconvenient for those who had to work in the city.

In the early 1880's, the Atlanta Street Railroad Company extended the trolley route to Reynoldstown, contributing greatly to the area's prosperity. In 1894, the trolley route was changed from Wylie to Fair Street thereby promoting the southward development of this predominantly black community. Many homes and commercial buildings clustered around the railroad facilities in the northern part of the neighborhood. As its popularity spread, a larger number of freed slaves flocked there. Many of them came from various regions in the south to seek work and help improve the quality of their lives.

Great speculation and debate exists as to how Reynoldstown got its name. The overwhelming consensus is in 1866, ex-slaves Madison and Sarah Reynolds moved from Covington, Georgia to settle between Atlanta and Decatur. Their son Isaiah Pearson Reynolds, who was born in Covington in 1862, graduated from Clark University in 1881. He became a major player in Reynoldstown's early development. The community was said to be named in honor of the Reynolds family. In 1906, I.P. Reynolds became the first black person to build a two story brick

building in the community, and from this location he operated an all-purpose store. The building was known as the I.P. Reynolds Building and still stands at 912 Wylie Avenue. He owned valuable property in Reynoldstown and was both a servant and leader of the community, and was considered a financial genius in his time. The earliest documented reference to Reynoldstown is on a plat at the Atlanta Historical Society date circa 1870.

Another famous landmark is the Beardon Temple A.M.E. that was called Phillips A.M.E. when it was built in the mid-1920's. The church was constructed entirely by its black parishioners. They took their mule carts up to Stone Mountain, quarried granite, and hauled it back to Reynoldstown. This effort was symbolic of the enduring and pioneering spirit of the community.

Reynoldstown became a part of Atlanta in 1909 along with Druid Hills, Edgewood, Copenhill, Brownwood and East Atlanta when the City annexed it. The community survived for well over a century and after World War II, experienced a brief boom. During the 1950's, however, the railroad industry saw a massive decline, which had a direct effect on the prosperity of the community.

#### 2. Community Involvement

Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League - The Reynoldstown Civic League was organized in 1952 under a program sponsored by the Atlanta University School of Social Work and the Atlanta Urban League. This was during the time when the city was segregated and voting rights were denied to African Americans. The main objective, therefore, was to involve the community in the political and voting processes. Early activities of the League in the neighborhood included motivating interest in public issues, sponsoring programs to enlighten residents, increased voter registration and the petitioning the Atlanta Board of Education to construct an elementary school in the community. As an outcome of the former, property was purchased and the I.P. Reynolds School was constructed and opened in 1958.

After a period of inactivity, the League was reorganized under the leadership of Mrs. Mattie Griffin as the Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League, charter in June 1974. Several improvements occurred under the League's leadership including installation of traffic lights for safety, secured MARTA bus service to the neighborhood, school crosswalks and improved police protection. Later, under the leadership of Mr. Young Hughley, Sr. the League secured funds to build a neighborhood park and recreation center, operated a "thrift store," sponsored the Reynoldstown Community Festival, published a neighborhood newsletter, and sponsored cleanup campaigns. The organization continued to work on many other important events that preserved the historical integrity of the neighborhood. The League continues to be the neighborhood's forty plus year old civic organization with current vital interest and activities.

Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation - The Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation (RRC) is an outgrowth of the Civic Improvement League. In the late 1980's the League was considering becoming a community development corporation to receive available monies for technical assistance and operating funds for neighborhood redevelopment. The League asked Young Hughley, Sr.'s son, Young Hughley, Jr. to research the feasibility of becoming such an organization. After visiting similar groups in other parts of the country with Hattie Dorsey of the

Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Hughley recommended that the new organization take a holistic approach - involve themselves with more than just housing, and address economic development, leadership and the overall health of the neighborhood.

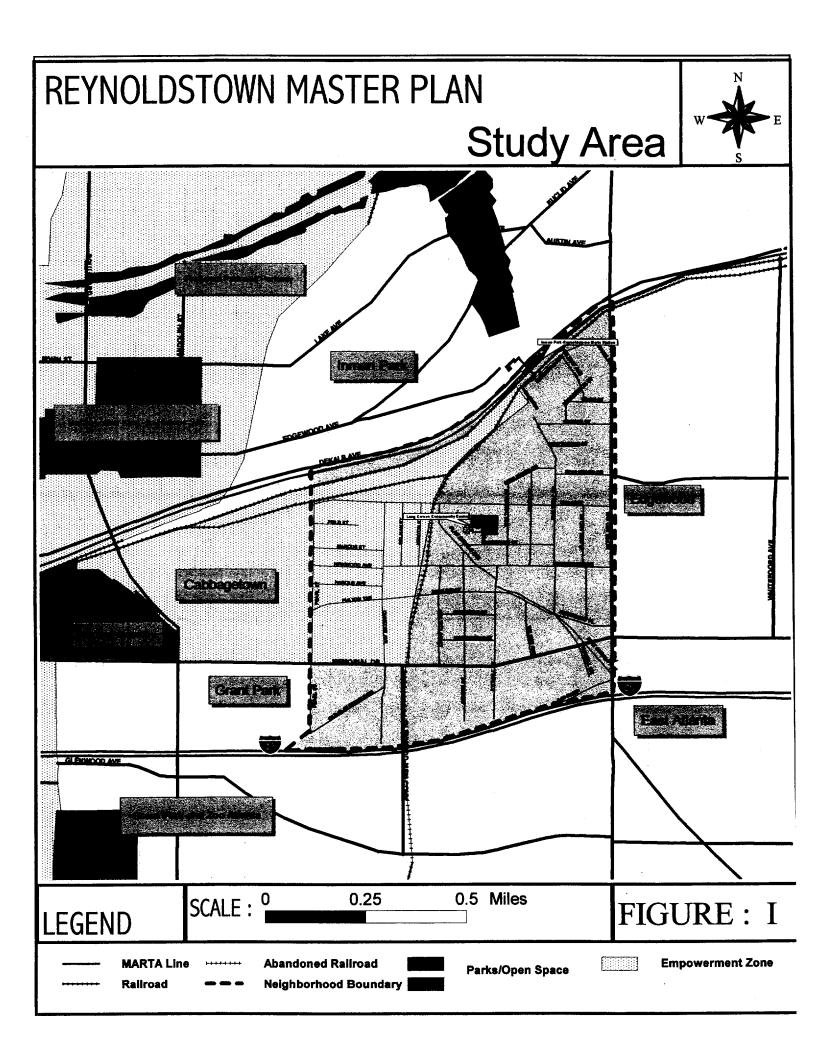
The League voted to start a CDC, but because it was top heavy with senior citizens and unable to attract young people, the league decided to form a separate organization. Thus the RRC was born and Young Hughley, Jr. took the helm. Formerly established in 1989 as a non-profit organization, the RRC is dedicated to the revitalization of the historic Reynoldstown community of Atlanta. Through revitalization, RRC hopes to return the neighborhood to the viable economic community it once was.

RRC has established a blueprint and is achieving its goals by providing affordable housing, rehabilitating existing housing, assisting existing businesses, establishing new businesses, exploring microenterprise entrepreneurial ventures, and attracting young urban pioneers who are sensitive and interested in living in inner city neighborhoods as homeowners. Several hundred homes have been rehabilitated and the organization has constructed affordable homes for sale as well as manages a thirty-unit apartment complex. A comprehensive package of services tailored to neighborhood conditions includes an employment support program and community loan fund, leadership development classes, GED classes, parenting workshops, art projects, home repair and maintenance workshops, and a public health training and empowerment initiative to help eliminate the barriers between urban dwellers and the health care system.

Since 1996, RRC has gotten residents involved in their neighborhood through an annual fundraiser called the Wheelbarrow Summer Theater. This is a three-day festival celebrating the collective efforts within the community and provides a showcase for the diversity of community talent through gospel, jazz, theatrical performances, neighborhood arts and crafts, and family picnics. The community has embraced the festival as a time to celebrate itself.

#### 3. The Atlanta Empowerment Zone

In the summer of 1994, the City of Atlanta submitted an application to the Federal Government for designation as an Urban Empowerment Zone. Accompanying the application was a strategic Plan which articulated the collective vision of the people, government and the business community on how the resources which would be made available would be used to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. In December 1994, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that the City of Atlanta had been designated as an Urban Empowerment zone. This designation made available to Atlanta a grant of \$100 million and targeted tax credits of \$150 million to accomplish the vision of the Strategic Plan. The Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation (AEZC) was created to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The preparation of this plan is being funded by the AEZC's Neighborhood Master Plan programs which provides long range comprehensive master plans for AEZ neighborhoods. A small portion of Reynoldstown falls within the empowerment zone as shown in Figure 1.



#### II. Demographic and Socio-Economic Conditions

#### 1. Previous Plans

Reynoldstown has been the subject of recent planning and research efforts both from the public and private sectors. The Reynoldstown Redevelopment Plan was prepared several years focused on the redevelopment of several parcels of land to capture the desire of the community's residents to preserve residential land use, and to maintain viable retail services. Parcel specific surveys were conducted to assess land use and structural conditions, vacant lots, occupancy and future development opportunities. Recommendations for a variety of affordable housing developments and economic development projects were identified.

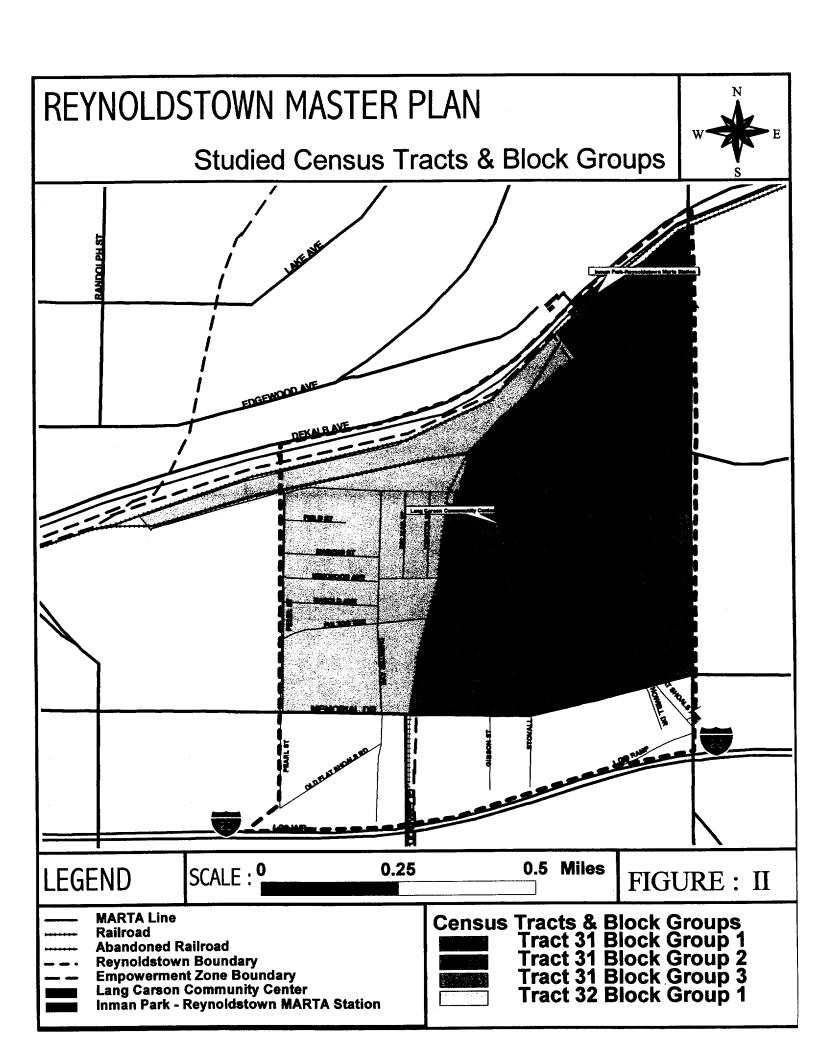
In July 1999, the Office of Data and Policy Analysis (DAPA) prepared a statistical summary of demographics on the Reynoldstown community for United Way to assess the potential for new programming related to social and physical improvements in Atlanta's inner city neighborhoods. Statistics were compiled on residential population characteristics, community assets, and neighborhood conditions.

A long-time partner of the Reynoldstown community is Georgia State University located in downtown Atlanta. During the fall of 1999, the school's Department of Social Work conducted a neighborhood wide study of Reynoldstown's social conditions. Together with community volunteers, students conducted a door-to-door survey of residents asking questions related to the overall quality of life in Reynoldstown. The survey included a section containing questions on socio-economics. Although the survey statistics are not official as with the U.S. Census, the results are the most recent measure available of the current socio-economic conditions in Reynoldstown until the 2000 Census is released.

#### 2. Socioeconomic Conditions

This section summarizes the socio-economic conditions of the Reynoldstown community including population, labor, housing and property analysis. Data was obtained from the U.S. Census, the Atlanta Regional Commission's population projections, and data collected from previous neighborhood plans.

Reynoldstown is contained in census tracts 31, 32, 50 and 52, which are further subdivided into six block groups (see Figure II). These geographic boundaries are used to analyze the socioeconomic conditions for Reynoldstown. The block groups in Census Tracts 50 and 52 contain only a portion of their total land area within Reynoldstown and consists primarily of commercial and industrial land uses. Data from these tracts, therefore, will not be considered in this socioeconomic analysis.



#### **Population Characteristics**

After major population losses from 1960 to 1980, Reynoldstown's population further declined by approximately 18% between 1980 and 1990 from 2,616 to 2,152. The Atlanta Regional Commission provides annual population projections by census tract. Block group projections are considered to be to small of a sample size for projections and are therefore not provided for accuracy concerns. The ARC projections also provide an average annual change in total population for each census tract. For this study, the average annual change for each census tract (tracts 31 and 32) has been applied to the block group level. With this method, a projected population change for the Reynoldstown neighborhood has been derived. The average annual change for tract 31 is -8 (an average annual loss of 8 people) while the average annual change for tract 32 is 36 (an average annual gain of 36 people). Based on these numbers, the population of Reynoldstown has been projected to increase slightly from 2,152 to 2,260 which is an increase of 5%. (see Tables 1 - 1C)

Reynoldstown's gender ratio is quite equal. Of the 2152 people counted in 1990, 52% were female and 48% were male. In 1980, Reynoldstown's racial composition was 91% black and 9% white. In 1990, the black majority remained with 90% of the population black and 10% white.

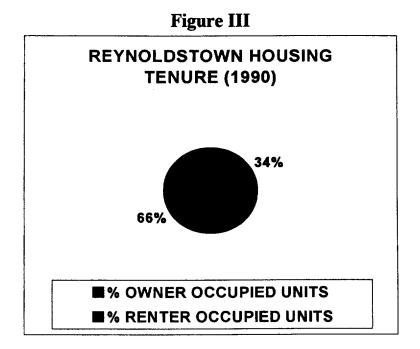
In 1980, Reynoldstown had a total of 892 households with an average household's size of 2.9 persons. By 1990, Reynoldstown had 814 households, a decline of 9%(78 households). The average household size decreased only slightly from 2.9 persons per household to 2.6. The ARC also provides annual households projections by census tract. As with the population projections, household projections have been applied to each block group based the annual household growth rate from 1990 to 1999. Based on this projection method, Reynoldstown overall household growth rate from 1990 to 1999 was 6% that increases the number of households slightly from 814 to 851. Based on this projection, Reynoldstown's average household's size in 1999 was still estimated to be 4.9 persons. (See Table 2 and Figure III)

The majority of Reynoldstown's households are renters. Sixty six percent of Reynoldstown's housing units are renter occupied while 34% are owner occupied. From 1980 to 1990, the percentage of renters increased from 62% to 66%. The median gross rent in 1990 was \$398 and the median value of owner occupied homes was \$30,750. The percentage of renter occupied units for Atlanta was lower at 48%. (See Table 2A)

Reynoldstown's age distribution indicates a high percentage of families present in 1990 with most children under the age of 18. Of Reynoldstown's 814 households in 1990, 92.4% of the households were families. The 1990 Census counts families as households with blood related individuals while "Households" does not account for the relationship of the persons within the household. Of Atlanta's households in 1990, 56.4% were families.

The largest age group in Reynoldstown is the age 25 to 44 (33%) and the smallest is the age 18 to 24 age group at 8%. There was little change in the age composition between 1980 and 1990. Between 1980 to 1990 there was a decrease of 4% in the age 18 to 24 group and a decrease of 5% in the age 45 to 64 group. The age 25 to 44 group increased by 9% while the under age 18 and the 65 and over groups remained the same at 27% and 15%. Reynoldstown resembles

Atlanta's age distribution in most categories except for the 18 to 24 group where Atlanta exceeded Reynoldstown by, 6%.



#### **Educational Characteristics**

In the regional economy, structural economic changes have reduced the availability of good paying low-skilled labor-intensive employment, which at one time provided steady employment for many people. Labor intensive jobs have been replaced with service oriented jobs that pay lower wages. Today's better paying employment opportunities require secondary education and skilled training. Many of the manufacturing jobs available within Reynoldstown's industrial districts require particular skills and training. A large portion of Reynoldstown's local population lacks the skills and/or education to take advantage of local employment opportunities.

A large percentage of Reynoldstown's population has not completed high school. In 1980, 79% of Reynoldstown's age 25 and over population had not completed high school. In 1990 this percentage decreased by 24% to 55%. In 1980, 15% of Reynoldstown's population had a high school degree and only 2% had a bachelor's degree. By 1990, the number of persons with a high school degree increased by 12% to 27% in 1990. The number of persons with a bachelor's degree only increased from 2% in 1980 to 4% in 1990. Some of the explanation for the increase in educational attainment in Reynoldstown from 1980 to 1990 is the fact that education is a function of age. Educational attainment typically decreases with age. Reynoldstown's 45 to 64 age cohorts decreased from 1980 to 1990 by 5% while the age 25 to 44 cohort increased by 4%. (See Table 4)

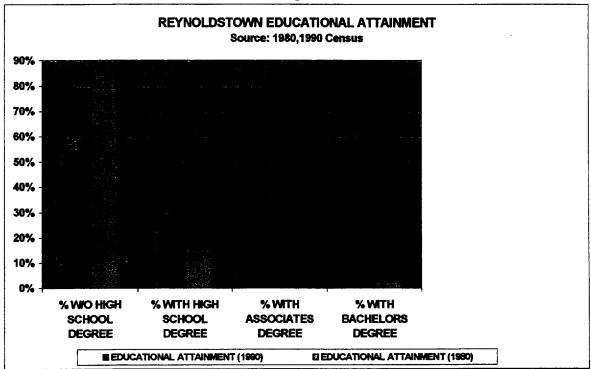


Figure IV

#### **Labor Force Characteristics**

The condition of Reynoldstown's labor force has remained relatively the same since 1980. Labor force participation (person's 16 years of age and over who are employed or actively seeking employment) has slightly increased while the unemployment rate has almost doubled. The unemployment percentage has increased from 6.4% in 1980 to 11.4% in 1990. Unemployment for the City of Atlanta in 1990 was lower at 9.2%. It should be noted that the unemployment rate includes persons who are in the labor force who have not been able to find employment. Persons not in the labor force (persons age 16 and over who unemployed and have not been actively seeking employment) are not accounted for in the unemployment rate. In 1990 54% of Reynoldstown's 16 and over population was in the labor force. Labor Force participation for the City of Atlanta in 1990 was 62%. The remaining 46% of Reynoldstown's 16 and over population was not in the labor force in 1980. In comparison 38% of Atlanta's 16 and over population was not in the labor force in 1990. (See Table 3)

By gender, the male labor force participation rate remained relatively the same while the female labor force participation rate increased by 4%. As more females entered the labor force, the female unemployment rate significantly increased also from 3% in 1980 to 13% in 1990. The unemployment rates for males remain relatively the same from 1980 to 1990. In 1990, Reynoldstown had an unemployment rate higher than Atlanta's and also has a lower level of labor force participation. Of the 1,621 persons 16 and over, 745 (46%) where not only unemployed, but where not actively seeking work. Such a high rate of non-participation in the

labor force serves as another indicator of long-term economic declines that have effected the residents of Reynoldstown.

#### **Income Characteristics**

In, 1980 the median household income for Reynoldstown was \$6,920. In 1990 it increased to \$15,682. The median household income for Atlanta in 1980 was higher at \$11,926 and remained higher in 1990 when it was \$22,275. Thus, Reynoldstown's median household income increased from 58% of the city median in 1980 to 70% of the city median in 1990. The estimated median household income for 1995 is \$20,813. This estimation is based on analyzing the percentage share of Reynoldstown's median household income to the City of Atlanta in 1990. The median household income for Atlanta in 1995 was \$29,943. The average share of Reynoldstown to Atlanta in 1990 was 70%. Therefore, it is estimated that Reynoldstown median households' income for 1995 was 70% of Atlanta's, which was \$20,813. Recently collected demographic date surveyed for a sample of Reynoldstown will support the assumption that economic conditions have not changed substantially in Reynoldstown since 1990. Income is therefore assumed to remain the same proportionally to Atlanta 1990 to 1995. The 1995 estimation also closely matches an estimation made by Georgia Power for Reynoldstown which estimated 1995 median household income to be \$21,812. (See Table 4B)

The percentage of households receiving income from a wage or salary did not change much between 1980 and 1990. (71% in 1980 and 68% in 1990) The number of households receiving public assistance remained about the same also at 18% in 1980 and 21% in 1990. The largest change in income characteristics was a decrease in the number of households receiving social security income, which fell from 37% in 1980 to 30% in 1990. The most likely explanation for this decrease is the 5% decrease in the age 45 to 64 age cohorts from 1980 in 1990. In comparison to Atlanta, Reynoldstown had a higher percentage of public assistance (8% higher), social security (13% higher) and retirement incomes (4% higher). Wage and salary income was equal to the City's (65%). (See Table 4A)

Poverty status is defined as individuals above or below a poverty level based on a poverty threshold compared to total income. The poverty threshold is calculated based on standards determining the basic demand of persons based on family size age and composition. The number of person living below the poverty level in Reynoldstown dropped from 39% in 1980 to 25% in 1990. A closer look at individuals below the poverty level in 1990 by age indicates that the majority of these persons are between the ages of 18 to 64 years (46%). Thirty seven percent are under the age of 18 and 18% are over the age of 64.

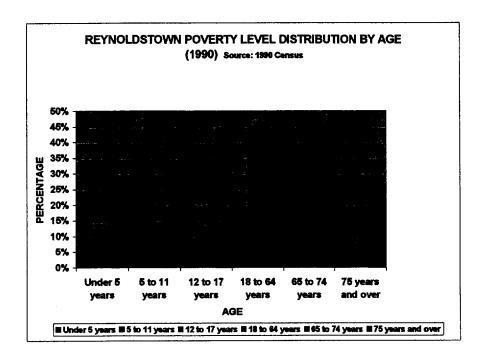
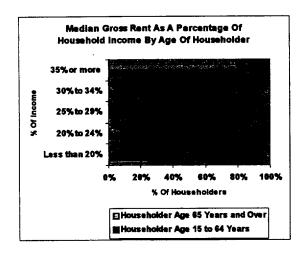


Figure V

The percentage of income contributed toward rents in the neighborhood is high; particularly among the elderly. This percentage is even higher for the elderly rental population. According to the 1990 Census, 49% of Reynoldstown's householders between the age of 15 to 64 years pay over thirty percent of their income for rent. Of Reynoldstown's' householders over the age 65, 85% pay over 30% of for rent. Eighty percent of these elderly households pay over 35% of their income for housing. Twenty nine percent of Reynoldstown's renter householders are over the age of 65. (See Table 5)



#### FIGURE VI

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Atlanta City Council

Regular Session

CONSENT

Pages: 1-6

ADOPT

YEAS: 15

NAYS: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 0

NOT VOTING: 1

EXCUSED: 0
ABSENT 0

SEE ATTACHED LISTING OF

ITEMS ADOPTED/ADVERSED

ON CONSENT AGENDA

Y McCarty Y Dorsey Y Moore Y Thomas Y Starnes Y Woolard Y Martin Y Emmons ITEM (S) REMOVEDFROM Y Bond Y Morris Y Maddox Y Alexander CONSENT AGENDA Y Winslow Y Muller Y Boazman NV Pitts 00-O-2039

#### 01/16/01 Council Meeting

#### ITEMS ADOPTED ON CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. 00-O-2062
- 2. 00-O-2040
- 3. 00-O-2041
- 4. 00-O-2042
- 5. 00-O-2043
- 6. 00-O-2044
- 7. 00-O-1681
- 8. 00-O-1684
- 9. 00-O-1986
- 10. 01-R-0036
- 11. 01-R-0062
- 12. 01-R-0029
- 13. 01-R-2059
- 14. 01-R-1682
- 15. 01-R-1683
- 16. 01-R-0008

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A RESOLUTION BY: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT / HUMAN	Committee	Committee	Sconsent □V Vote SRC Vote
RESOURCE COMMITITEE	Date	Date	CERTIFIED
A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE REYNOLDSTOWN MASTERPLAN; AND FOR	Chair	Chair	
OTHER PURPOSES.	Action: Fav. Adv. (Held (see rav. side) Other: $\frac{1}{12}$ $\frac{1}{12}$	Action: Fav, Adv, Held (see rev. side) Other:	Contract Assertion.
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